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ABSTRACT

This bulletin presents news and opinions of the staff of Project Brave of the St. John Valley in northern Maine. This issue presents letters from the community in which citizens express their feelings concerning the value of bilingual education. (SK)

VOL. II NO. 6

PROJECT BRAVE BULLETIN

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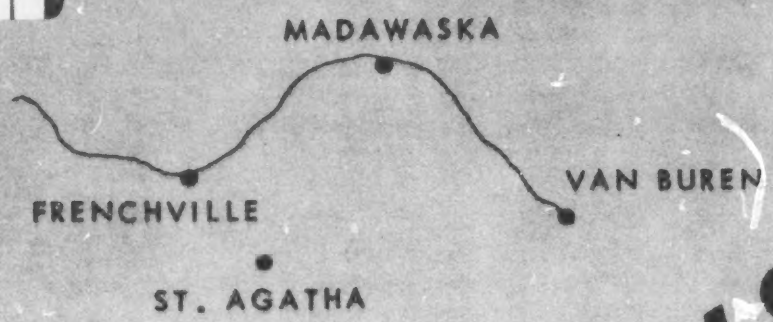

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ST. JOHN VALLEY BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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MADAWASKA

Adrian E. Gagnon
Port Director of Customs
Madawaska, Maine

BILINGUALISM & THE U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE

My reason for writing on the above subject is that it is a matter with which I am very familiar. I have been in U.S. Customs since 1954, and all through those years, I have been stationed on both the Maine-New Brunswick border and the Maine-Quebec border.

During the summer of 1954 I worked at the Port of Van Buren. During the summer of 1955, I worked at Madawaska, and I worked in Bridgewater during the summer of 1956.

I would not be so naive as to state that, regardless of what you do or where you work, French is indispensable. However, I would not hesitate to say that doing certain types of work and/or being in certain locations, knowing French does come in plenty handy.

As I mentioned above, I worked in Van Buren and Madawaska during the summers of 1954 and 1955, and French helped me immensely in those places, due to the great number of Quebecois' coming into the U.S. to visit during those periods. On the other hand, I spent the summer of 1956 in Bridgewater and I could have gotten along just fine without French. As I mentioned above, location is a big factor.

Then came 1957. I had been teaching school in Van Buren since 1952, but because of the low pay in the teaching profession, I decided to join U.S. Customs on a full-time basis on June 17, 1957. I worked in Van Buren Customs until December 1957, and then came my transfer to the Western Border, specifically, St. Pamphile. For those who are ardent hunters, St. Pamphile is a familiar name. The U.S. Customs station in that area is situated on Township 15, Range 15, and is adjacent to small towns in the Province of Quebec, where 99.9% of the population speaks and understands only French. At this point in my Customs career, I can truly say that knowing French and English was INDISPENSABLE. I worked here in St. Pamphile for 31 months.

Since then, I have worked in Fort Kent on two different occasions, and likewise in Madawaska. In my present position as Port Director of Customs, a position I have occupied since January 1, 1966, I have had need of my French quite extensively. How? In both places, Madawaska and Fort Kent, not all the Inspecrors are bilingual. On various occasions, problems arise from the public, at least 50% of which are from Quebec and predominantly French. The main problem is the language barrier, the public not understanding the questions being asked and the Inspector not understanding the answer to these questions. This is where, in these locations, if the Supervisor is bilingual, little problems can be settled on the spot and the credibility gap is narrowed.

In conclusion, I would like to make this brief statement: "It is not necessary to be bilingual to get along, generally speaking, but on certain jobs and in certain locations, it surely is a handicap NOT being bilingual."

Mr. Robert Lausier
Parent
Madawaska, Maine

Writing and expressing my thoughts about bilingualism or the Title VII Project is certainly new to me, since up until six months ago, I knew very little about Title VII and its doings in our school system. I'm certainly not an expert on advising the Title VII personnel about this project, but being a parent of seven children, with five now in our school system, I'm very interested in expressing my views.

First, I feel a little disturbed about the fact that my oldest girls, now in the fifth and junior high grades have already lost or forgotten most of their French. I might point out that they spoke French fluently before entering Kindergarten. We fell for the saying that "if you speak French to them at home, they'll retain their French language." That was a lot of HOGWASH! How can a child, who is being told not to whisper or speak a word of French in school, and taught to feel a certain guilt about the language, be able to speak and enjoy the language at home? It also made my wife and I aware that, as parents, we don't have all that much influence on our children which we thought we had. Their friends, either French or English speaking, were influencing our children more than us in regards to which language they would speak. Let's also keep in mind now that their French speaking companions were also told in school "you speak English, period!"

Having a child in the bilingual Kindergarten class has encouraged us tremendously. We can now see a little light shining. Rebecca, the youngest of the five in school, knew very little French when she entered Mrs. Theresa Thibeault's class last fall. Surprisingly now, she is able to express or speak a few words. The most astonishing thing about her speaking French is the fact that she seems to enjoy it tremendously. This seems to carry on to the older children. The one regret we have now is that Title VII came too late to benefit the older four, which are not in the Title VII Bilingual Project.

Another small point I would like to make is that I have a brother who just recently retired from the Air Force. After 21 years, they have a family of seven children and naturally they moved around all over the United States. When they visited us a few years ago, their children knew more French than ours. Surprisingly, they seemed to challenge the idea of learning to speak it more than ours did. This reflected the fact that they didn't have this certain GUILT that ours were engraved with.

In closing, I would like to encourage all the wonderful personnel and teachers who are part of the Title VII Project and hope that with all the trials and errors which are certainly forthcoming, they will be able to extend this project throughout the school system so that our children can learn to speak both the English and French language which they so rightly deserve.

MADAWASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUBMITTED BY THE MADAWASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The members of the Madawaska Historical Society will hold an Arts and Crafts show at the beginning of the month of May. The question might arise: isn't the purpose of a historical society to be wholly oriented towards the past history of an area or towards the preservation of its artifacts? Both these projects are definitely part of the work of the members of such an organization but the past has no significance if it cannot be correlated to the present. The achievements of the present should form the basis for progress in the years to come. So the past, present and future should be the chief concerns of such a society. Of what benefit would the study of the past be if this study could not furnish guidelines for bettering the future?

The present is always difficult to study objectively for the person studying it cannot help insert his biases and prejudices. Even the past has too often been misinterpreted and twisted by the historian's social and religious upbringing so that truth becomes a tissue of lies. Artifacts and art are expressions of the human mind and are the results of the skills acquired by different members of a society. If all the skills and artistic talents of the people of the Valley could be exhibited in one central place, the aggregate of these could very well form a basis on which a judgment of the evolution of our culture could be made. It could also serve as a criteria for a future appraisal of the development of the same. The interpretation and the judgment of the different articrafts will be less apt to be evaluated erroneously and misrepresented than other achievements such as those in the field of education or standards of living. All these could become norms in evaluating our culture.

Great efforts will be made to obtain contributions from one end of the Valley to the other. Only if this is done can the project be said to be representative and therefore be a complete picture of the fusion of the different cultures which have been influential in developing our present day culture.

The word biculturism is often used in reference to the cultures of the Valley. It is misleading. If one wants to refer to the different cultures that have made their imprint in the area, let it be multi-culturism if such a word can be coined. Biculturism should not be used in lieu of bilingualism. There are two main languages. No one will deny that. Ninety per cent of the people speak those two languages. That is not denied. But let us forget the word biculturism for if the history of the Valley is briefly studied, one will easily see at least six cultures that are still affecting the evolution of attitudes, social structures, religious beliefs and all the other facets which our culture comprises.

The Malicite culture has been negligible as its imprints had been made on the white man's cultures previous to their coming here. In 1785, the Acadians came to settle permanently on the banks of the Upper St. John River. The qualification of 'Upper' is made because the 'lower' reaches of the river had seen these people since the earliest times of the French settlement in the New World in 1605. The Acadians brought with them a culture with three main characteristics: an insatiable love of the soil, a blind faith in their religion, and a deep-rooted attachment to their language. This love of the land is still very much part of the culture of the people of this area. No matter if these have been dispossessed from some rocky parcel of land and have become expatriates in some industrial center, a desire to return to the land will be found in them even to the third generation. Respect and love for their priests and a blind faith in their religion will still characterize them. After a hundred and fifty years of being part of the state of Maine, a stronghold of Yankeeism, the fact that all of them still speak a language which they had brought with them thirty-five years previous to this incorporation must show a certain amount of stubborness and also a great love for a

'patois'. By the way, this patois was currently spoken in all the western districts of northern France in 1600. It is mostly from this patois that modern academic French was evolved.

The second culture is Canadian and comes from the district of Kamouraska. It is quite distinct although similarities exist. In language the accent and vocabulary were dissimilar. Many variations in folklores and songs can be found. The cavalier attitudes of the latter towards the tenets of religion remained for many generations and may not be wholly eradicated even in the present generation. The nautical terms of the Acadians in many expressions used in farming have become predominant. Differences in styles of architecture are still evident. Two other cultures will bring their own styles of architecture and evidence of these can be seen if one travels as far west as the Allagash and as far east as the New Brunswick boundary towards Grand Falls.

The third culture that came to the Valley was mainly New Englander or Yankee from the Kennebec and Penobscot Rivers. These people settled mostly in the western reaches of the river. They were attracted to the area by its great quantities of long lumber. As the lumber industry developed, the lumber barons, the storekeepers, millwrights and bankers followed. They formed a ruling class that predominated in that area until the beginning of the twentieth century. Language, religion and business practices were indeed so different that it took many generations for these to be partially assimilated by the preceding cultures. A few holidays which these late comers brought with them, such as Thanksgiving, were not observed by many a generation ago.

The lumber barons who settled at the eastern end of the Valley were not Yankees. They had broken or renounced their American birthrights during the Revolutionary War. They were the descendents of Loyalists who had been faithful to the King of England. They brought with them an admixture of Irish emigrants who had left Ireland on account of the poverty and famine that plagued that unfortunate country. Their language was similar to the Loyalists' but they brought a love of religion that was very close to the ideal of the Acadians. These last mostly settled in the area of Van Buren and the surrounding plantations as the Yankees had made of Fort Kent the center of their many activities.

The last culture which should be mentioned has so far had a lesser impact on the Valley than the others. In this respect, it may be considered as minor although in itself it is not a minor culture. The Lebonese came only at the beginning of the twentieth century. The few who came, easily became assimilated with the Acadian and Canadian cultures on account of their deep attachment to their religious beliefs and the facility with which they learned the French language. A great many of them became, for a while, trilingual. When the children had a French speaking mother, these soon lost their Lebonese language.

This can only be an inadequate résumé of the cultures which have made an imprint on the Valley. Yet these should be considered in a study of our present day culture.

With all these varied cultures to draw from, it is hoped that an Arts and Crafts Show in the Valley will be a success in its excellence of exhibits and in its variety of the old and new crafts.

The members of the Madawaska Historical Society want to express their sincere appreciation for the cooperation given this project, to the staff of Title VII, to the members of the Extension Service office at Fort Kent, and to the committee members of the communities which make up this wonderful Upper St. John River Valley.

S.A.D. 33

Jack J. Michaud
Assistant Manager
Northern National Bank
Madawaska, Maine

To know French and English in our area is a must. It is both beautiful and useful, but how long will it last? Twenty, thirty years . . . no doubt it will leave us or will we leave it? Is this what's in the wind? We see our children in one language in our local schools, namely "English". Every educational method used and accepted by the children such as TV, radio, movies, newspapers and directional signs are in English. At school the child will probably attend one period a day in French, but once in the hall, English is the language and the French teacher will join in. At recess, English is the language spoken, except a few French words which cannot be found in the dictionary.

In community affairs, French has been put aside. Town meetings are held in English in a French community. Parish Board Meetings are held in English when all members are French speaking. The St. John Valley Bilingual Program, while doing a marvelous job, holds every meeting in English with board members made up of Michauds, Lausiers, Ouellettes, Gagnons, Levesques, etc. Church services are also held in English because of the children, we are told. The children are almost all French!

At home, French reading materials are seldom found, except for an old "Missel Dominicale" which is now obsolete. Our French newspaper "Le Madawaska" has as much English as French. Our local book stores do not sell French reading material.

Some parents speak French to their children but there are always one or two English words in every sentence. Others will insist on having their children speak only English because they do not want their children to be held back in school as they were. Most parents foresee the day their child will have to leave the area like most of them are doing today, and they want them to know the language that is spoken south of Presque Isle. The child remembers well that his father always had an Anderson, Horton or a Gordon for a boss where he was employed for thirty years . . . .

Bilingualism in our area is beautiful and cultural . . . but how long will it last? If it dies, who will have killed it??

Jean Paul Ouellette
Manager
Farm Credit Service
Madawaska, Maine 04756

COMMUNICATION IN MY LINE OF WORK AND TITLE VII

The ability to speak both English and French in my line of work and Title VII for my children is very important for the following facts:

1. MY BUYERS -- The majority of the farmers I sell my product (money) to speak both English and French. However, a good many of them are much more comfortable communicating with me in French. Many of them will use French only. Some will use the English language much more with me, but will be much less responsive if a third person is present. More so, if that third person speaks English only. My ability to understand and to be understood in the language of the farmer's choice is essential here.

2. MY SOURCES OF CREDIT INFORMATION -- Here again, the majority of the people from whom I gather my information speak both languages. These are dealers, bankers, farmers, other lending institutions, etc., from both sides of the border. Many prefer to use the French language and some prefer English. Others speak only English or French.

3. MY SOURCES OF FUNDS (MONEY) -- These people are 100% English speaking. A good command of English is very important most of the time. You have to be able to convince them in the English language to sell you a product (money) that a farmer just bought from you in the French language.

4. MY CHILDREN -- Title VII will improve both languages in my children because of its ability to supply our classrooms with better equipment, better materials and better trained teachers. And, most important, it will improve their overall attitudes towards both languages.

To the farmers, to my sources of information and funds and to me, our two languages are more important than our product -- money. To my children, a better rounded education using two languages, English and French, is important to them.

Miss Ursula Michaud
Secretary
Farm Credit Service
Madawaska, Maine

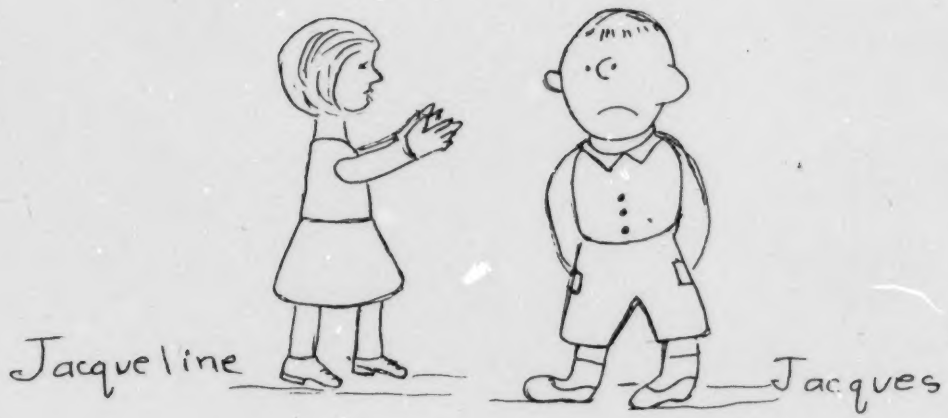
There is no doubt in my mind that for the French person, the immediate need is to become literate in English. In the past, our schools were geared to try to do this at the sacrifice of eradicating French from the school system. This often produced an insecure person who "plowed" through life, mediocre in both languages.

Still, in spite of everything, almost every one of us of French descent can look back and think of rich experiences we would have been robbed of, had we been unilingual. I can think of a multitude of such incidents, but one that sticks out in my mind concerns three interesting episodes our office had with foreign visitors.

Some years back, our Association was chosen by the U.S. Government as the "ideal" for Vietnamese Government officials who were interested in learning agricultural credit. We were selected because of the nature of our business, and principally because we understood and spoke French. They were with us for three months. The following year, they were followed by nine Congolese visitors, and finally, one from Rabat, Morocco. It is interesting to note that these men, besides knowing their native tongue, were polyglots who were fluent in French and all fared well with our Valley French.

This reaffirmed my belief that the world had indeed become smaller and there was a great need for better communication. What better way than through languages!!

With the recent interest and programs diverted to our area to perpetuate languages, I am confident our English, as well as French descent pupils, have a great opportunity to become proficient in languages, which will in the end, enrich their lives.



Sr. Alberta Chasse
Junior High Teacher
Bailey School
Frenchville, Maine

- Jacques, je suis bilingue.
- Quoi, tu es...tu es...bi...
- C'est que je parle français.
- Et depuis quand?
- Depuis que "Title VII et Title III" sont de la partie.
- Veux-tu bien me dire pourquoi il fallait mettre le pays en émoi pour parler français?
- J'ai un secret à te dire.
- Et devrais-je le garder?
- C'est qu'il y a cinq ans, nous ne devions pas parler français dans les écoles du Maine!
- Est-ce une mauvaise langue? Pourquoi l'aimes-tu tant?
- Jacques, il y eut un temps où je n'osais parler français de peur d'être rejetée. Je l'aime et je veux le parler. Chez nous, papa, maman, mes frères, et mes soeurs parlent français.
- Alors tu aimes vraiment la langue française?
- Oui, le français, c'est la langue de mes ancêtres, les Acadiens.
- Ah! je comprends.
- Jacques, je me réjouis que tu comprennes.
- Je sens que j'ai du calibre: une langue, des coutumes, des traditions! Je suis quelqu'un!
- Et que feras-tu de la langue anglaise?
- Jacques, ne t'ai-je pas dis que je veux devenir bilingue!

Rev. Sylvio J. Levesque
Pastor
St. Joseph Parish
Sinclair, Maine

Thinking of languages raises a question in my mind: "What gives America its unique character?" I believe that it is its unity in the midst of the diversity of its people. One of the reasons why it is so wonderful to live in America is that our country does not require that its citizens divest themselves of their personal identity in order to fit in a huge melting pot. America respects the faith, race and ethnic origin of all.

We rightly require the teaching of our common language, that is English in all the schools. But beyond that, our Governments, Federal, State and Local, invest huge sums of money to foster the teaching of secondary languages, giving each one of us the opportunity to retain the knowledge of our ancestral language. As a nation, we have come to realize that there is a vast richness in every culture. And we are a nation formed of almost every culture under the sun. The Government is trying to teach each one of its citizens to be proud of himself, of what he is, of his ancestral background. He is conscious of the fact that it is only by firstly being proud of himself that a person will be proud of his country. This is true of every citizen of whatever background he may be, be he French, Italian, Greek, Anglo-saxon or any other. No American can gain anything by losing his identity and cutting himself off from his ancestral background. In fact, he would be poorer.

Apart from intellectual, personal and emotional reasons compelling every American to strive to keep his ancestral language, while at the same time learning to master the universal language of our Land, that is the English language, personally I have found it very practical in my own vocation to know another language. In my particular case, this langage is French.

When I was ordained to the priesthood of Christ, it was to serve the people of God, or better, as many of the people of God as possible. My knowledge of French has certainly made me more expandable. Practically speaking, my Bishop can appoint me in any parish from Kittery to Fort Kent, Maine. I do not intend to blame those who cannot serve in any parish. Neither do I intend to boast in writing this. I merely wish to bring out the fact that I am thankful to Almighty God for the grace of being born in a situation in which, through no merit of mine, I could grow up learning two languages. Because my Country and my parents gave me the opportunity to learn French, the language of my forefathers, I have been able to reach more of the people of God. And for this, I am very grateful.

Mark Michaud
Student
Wisdom High School
S.A.D. #33

WHO NEEDS TWO LANGUAGES?!!!

In many parts of the world this touchy topic comes up very often. We, too, face the problem on whether two languages are needed. My answer to this, is "no, we don't need two languages." Many English speaking people are getting along pretty well and likewise for the French speaking. Although many people are getting along with one language, let's face it, our community is made up of English and French speaking people. No, two languages are not needed, but knowing two languages in our community helps a heck of a lot.

Students are now realizing that they possess two assets toward acquiring a secure position in life; these being a good (although many improvements could be made) educational set-up, and an opportunity to become proficient in two languages.

The other day, I went seeking information on a future position and the man told me that speaking both French and English helped to a great extent in qualifying for the job. He stated that last year a man waiting in the 24th place to be chosen for the job was moved up to first place because he knew both French and English.

To me, the programs that are being introduced in the schools on teaching both French and English are too late. Why couldn't they have been brought up when I was in elementary school and followed up? Educators probably would have had an easier time convincing people that it's the best thing that has ever happened to us.

The following is an interview of Mrs. Lorraine Ouellette (Title VII second grade teacher of Keegan School) and Karen Lagassey (her student), by Karen's mother, Mrs. Robert Lagassey, co-chairman of the Van Buren P.A.C. and also a member of the Title VII Advisory Council.

"I am Mrs. Louise Lagassey and I came here today as a parent volunteer. I have a list of questions to ask Mrs. Ouellette."

Mrs. Lagassey: "Mrs. Ouellette, when did Title VII start?"

Mrs. Ouellette: "I believe it was started in the fall of 1970."

Mrs. Lagassey: "In what ways are both Title VII and Follow Through similar?"

Mrs. Ouellette: "Generally, both programs are similar because both programs value bilingualism very highly. Both programs are aimed at helping young students in their French. Both strive to give these children a working vocabulary in French. Both programs respect the quality of the local patois as a good language and build upon it to provide young students with a more standard French."

Mrs. Lagassey: "In what way are they different?"

Mrs. Ouellette: "Title VII is making a more direct effort to achieve complete bilingualism by stressing more use of French in the instructional process. Follow Through, on the other hand, teaches French as a second language to all students. Both programs compliment each other very well and both supplement the main program of early childhood education in S.A.D. #24."

Mrs. Ouellette: "Karen, do you like our French program?"

Karen: "Yes."

Mrs. Ouellette: "Why?"

Karen: "Because I'm learning to speak two languages and I'm learning to read in French and English."

Mrs. Lagassey: "I noticed you have two new pupils today. How do new pupils fit into the program?"

Mrs. Ouellette: "They will be given individualized instruction in French for a while till they can fit in with the group and with the French program. Every youngster will aid by giving them help to build up an adequate vocabulary."

Mrs. Lagassey: "My daughter told me she does team teaching. Could you explain that?"

Mrs. Ouellette: "Youngsters help each other and work in teams. A team that has mastered a concept helps the team that has run into difficulty. They work on a one-to-one basis for about 15 minutes every morning."

Mrs. Lagassey: "How is the community involved in your French reading program?"

Mrs. Ouellette: "The economy of the area is discussed in two of our books, Les Patates and La Forêt. History, heritage and culture of the area is discussed in the books Les Acadiens and L'Eglise."

Mrs. Ouellette: "Karen, did you bring a French book home?"

Karen: "Yes."

Mrs. Ouellette: "Which one?"

Karen: "L'Eglise."

Mrs. Ouellette: "Could you tell us something about it?"

Karen: "I read it to my father, my mother and Rene (her sister in grade 3). Rene liked it and she wants to speak French too."

Mrs. Ouellette: "Only speak French? Does she want to learn to read also?"

Karen: "Yes."

Mrs. Ouellette: "What makes you think so?"

Karen: "She tries every day."

Mrs. Ouellette: "What do you do?"

Karen: "We get together and I teach her and she reads after me."

Mrs. Ouellette: "Is she learning very well?"

Karen: "Yes, she tries very hard."

Mrs. Ouellette: "When you bring La Forêt home, will you do the same thing?"

Karen: "Yes."

Mrs. Ouellette: "At school what are the books that you've been reading at the French station?"

Karen: "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge, and Les Trois Ours."

Mrs. Ouellette: "Would you like to read a page from L'Eglise?"

Karen: "Yes, page 3. C'est une eglise.
C'est une eglise en brique.
C'est une eglise en brique rouge.
C'est une eglise en brique rouge dans la Vallee.
C'est une eglise.
C'est une eglise en pierre.
C'est une eglise en pierre grise.
C'est une eglise en pierre grise dans la Vallee."

Mrs. Lagassey: "This morning as I looked around I was very impressed with the way youngsters use various equipment. Is this also made available by Title VII?"

Mrs. Ouellette: "Yes, we have the eight-station listening center which is used with tapes or records depending on the concept being taught. The language master and headset have helped the student who needed extra help with reading (both in French and in English). The Precyclopedias have been used a great deal for research by the youngsters. The creative arts supplies furnish enjoyment and beautiful results in creativity. The Cuisenaire Rods have helped make math a fun game. I have named just a few of the audi-visual materials, furnished by Title VII. Having all this wonderful equipment at our disposal has been a great asset in helping each child work to his full potential."

Mrs. Lagassey: "Thank you very much, Mrs. Ouellette and Karen. Your answers are most informative."

S.A.D. 24

Miss Martine Pelletier
First Grade Teacher
St. John School
Van Buren, Maine

Communications: "The imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions or information by speech, writing or signs."

What about the child who comes to school knowing only a few words in English, and sometimes none at all, and coming to an environment where only English was taught? How insecure he must have felt! Now the majority of children coming to school know how to speak as well as understand the English language.

What about the French? People are now waking up to the idea that we have something that most towns do not have, and why not use these resources to the best of our ability!

Thanks to Title VII and its staff, progress is now on its way. Booklets have been made and printed in French geared for the lower grades, and what would be more appropriate but the first book written on our Acadian history. A book well written and illustrated depicts the history of our ancestors. Sister Dorothy, better known as Sister Dot, is now teaching the first graders their own Acadian ancestry. The second book, Les Patates, has been written for the second grade, and is well suited for the children of this area. The third book, L'Eglise, again describes our Acadian ancestors, where the priest and church played an important part in our history. This third book is about our own churches along the St. John Valley. Sister Elena and Lorraine Ouellette are teaching the children to read as well as conversing in French. To instill in the children a love of French, projects are being made. Sister Elena, in her projects, used the words "devant" and "derriere." She had the children make an altar, pews and also paper dolls which were placed on a platform representing the interior of a church -- the altar being placed in the "devant" of the church and the pews in the "derriere" of the church, with the paper dolls both in the "devant" and "derriere." Linking the past to the present, another project was made on Father Rasle. A map was made showing the different places where the Acadians settled, as well as Indians, canoes and products, and magic markers were used to label these.

Lorraine Ouellette will be teaching Acadian history. She will have the children dramatize the story, and of course, all will be in French. To reinforce the learning of this subject, puppets will later be used.

Being a bilinguist is now being appreciated for the first time.

FELICITATIONS

"On reconnait un arbre à ses fruits" dit le proverbe. A ce propos, je puis avancer que le projet, "Title VII," est un très bon arbre.

Récemment, j'ai eu le plaisir d'entendre lire en français un élève de deuxième année. J'en ai été épatée, il aurait pu être comparé, dans une certaine mesure, à certains élèves de 9ème et 10ème années.

Un tel debut est sûrement prometteur pour la survivance de l'héritage français dans la Vallée.

Mes sincères félicitations à "Title VII" qui a été le grand instigateur de cette bonne cause et aussi aux professeurs qui coopèrent dans ce beau mouvement patriotique.

Comme professeur de français au cours supérieur, je suis impatiente de jouir du fruit des efforts de "Title VII" et du labeur du personnel enseignant au niveau élémentaire.

Sister Eva Chouinard
French Department
S.A.D. #24

Mrs. Marcella Belanger-Violette
Housewife
Van Buren, Maine

COMMENTS ON TITLE VII

Can Title VII prove to be one of the instruments needed to enable us to experience the beginnings of a Cultural Renaissance, a "Relève," so to speak, in our Vallée de la Saint-Jean? Can this program reach our children and indirectly through them, our adults in such a way that the child will learn to appreciate himself — his whole self — and will learn to know himself, to love himself, to respect himself. He must eventually feel free to be himself because he will KNOW and VALUE WHO HE IS and WHAT HE IS!

My opinion is a positive one, as the program is properly structured. The administrators and teaching personnel are aware of and have faith in the fact that such a program can bear a deep social influence on the child. The qualitative aspect of the program is of utmost importance. Here, I stress the fact that the persons involved in this program must know, must understand, and must value our historical ethnic background. How else can this personnel give a proper self-esteem to the child of his French ancestry, if they, themselves, are unaware of and unappreciative of it? Suffice to add: ONE CANNOT GIVE WHAT ONE DOES NOT FIRST POSSESS. The child must learn that he is an American of French descent.

Here, in our Valley, knowing and caring for our French heritage, touches at the very core of the whole individual, the mind AND THE HEART of the individual. I have always believed that if one feels inferior, for whatever reason it may be, one is only half a human being, and therefore one reacts and behaves accordingly.

How fortunate we are that our Valley people have deep and worthy roots. Suffice now, to explore these "souches héréditaires et historiques." We study the culture, the history of many other peoples and civilizations. WHAT ABOUT OURS? WHY NOT OURS? It is such a noble and valiant one. There is definitely no absence of culture within this Valley — let no one tell us otherwise. There is only the LAMENTABLE ABSENCE of not knowing, of not cherishing that which is rightfully ours. For too long have our Valleyites of French descent been made to believe that they "did not amount to much of anything." I term such a state of affairs a "crying shame."

If our children are taken as they are, if they are appreciated for what they are, they will automatically feel approved. It will therefore follow that once the child knows and senses this approval, he will feel loved and wanted. The result? He will learn in turn to love himself fully. He will GROW FROM WITHIN; HE WILL BLOOM AND BLOSSOM FROM WITHOUT.

As previously stated, one of the aims of Title VII is to enable the child to improve his self-image. This process will be greatly faciliated, now that his home language is also his school language — and this, at the very onset of his school experience. Those impressionable first years! The child should be helped immeasurably in developing positive attitudes.

In striving to mold the child's pride in his background as a bilingual, this child should grow up to realize his full potential, because he will not reject part of himself. I reiterate: PRIMARY CULTURE AND LANGUAGE MUST NOT BE DISREGARDED. Great effort must be made to understand, to honor cultural differences WHEREVER they exist. One must not content himself with merely giving lip service to helping the child: one must live what one says he appreciates.

There are many advantages to be had from knowing two languages, two cultures — in our case French and English. Those of us who know this, those of us who understand this, those of us who cherish this, want our Valley residents to benefit from this dual background. Naturally, in order to profit from it, the people of our area must be made aware of it. A dual culture is an asset, a great asset, and not a handicap.

Our French heritage must be honored. This is a cause worth fighting for. This is a cause around which our citizenry ought to rally.

So much needs to be done! But we have at least taken that first step! The seed has been sown. Title VII is that seed. Will it grow and bloom for all to see and cherish? Only time will tell. I, for one, am most optimistic. FAITH and PERSEVERANCE CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS!

Peuple de la Vallée!
Tu es grand — tu es noble!
D'une noblesse agrandie, renforcie
Par le sang, par la souffrance,
Par l'amour de Dieu et de la famille.
Peuple de la Vallée!
Veille bien sur cette grandeur.
Veille bien sur cette noblesse.
Peuple de la Vallée!
Protège bien ton heritage.
C'est ta richesse!
C'est ton TRÉSOR!

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The Title VII staff wishes to thank the above members for their fine contribution in writing the articles for this bulletin.